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**Amendments to the Claims**

**This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims:**

1. (currently amended) A computer-software system, comprising:
  - a set of available resources;
  - name space which corresponds to a task executing in the computer-software system, the name space for holding a flexible binding that binds a local name used by the task to one or more of the available resources using a description of a desired resource;
  - resource mediator that obtains a message from the task which contains the local name and in response the resource mediator identifies a resource handler task for handling the message by resolving the local name using the flexible binding, wherein the message from the task includes a binding-type indicator to instruct the resource mediator on resolving the local name.
2. (currently amended) The computer-software system of claim 1, wherein the flexible binding includes a reference to a resource descriptor in a repository of the computer software system, wherein resource descriptors have a uniform structure for different types of available resources.
3. (currently amended) A computer-software system, comprising:
  - a set of available resources;
  - name space which corresponds to a task executing in the computer-software system, the name space for holding a flexible binding that binds a local name used by the task to one or more of the available resources using a description of a desired resource;
  - resource mediator that obtains a message from the task which contains the local name and in response the resource mediator identifies a resource handler task for handling the message by resolving the local name using an arbitration policy to select one of the available resources the flexible binding, wherein the flexible binding includes a binding-type indicator that informs the resource mediator of whether to use references to

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a resource descriptor or the description of the desired resource when resolving the local name.

4. (currently amended) The computer software system of claim 1, wherein the binding-type indicator informs the resource mediator of whether to use references to a resource descriptor or the description of the desired resource or a combination thereof when resolving the local name.

5. (currently amended) The computer software system of claim 4, wherein the binding-type indicator causes the resource mediator to use a tight binding when resolving the local name such that the resource mediator uses the references to resolve the local name.

6. (currently amended) A computer software system, comprising:

a set of available resources;

name space which corresponds to a task executing in the computer software system, the name space for holding a flexible binding that binds a local name used by the task to one or more of the available resources using a description of a desired resource;

resource mediator that obtains a message from the task which contains the local name and in response the resource mediator identifies a resource handler task for handling the message by resolving the local name using the flexible binding; and

a binding-type indicator that causes the resource mediator to use a tight binding to resolve the local name if any references to a resource descriptor correspond to one of available resources and to use the flexible binding otherwise such that the flexible binding is based on the description of the desired resource, wherein an arbitration policy is used to select a resource if plural available resources are available.

7. (currently amended) The computer software system of claim 4, wherein the binding-type indicator causes the resource mediator to use a flexible binding when resolving the local name by searching the repository for a resource descriptor having a set of attributes that match the description of the desired resource.

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8. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 4, wherein the binding-type indicator causes the resource mediator to use a flexible binding to update the references when resolving the local name by searching the repository for a resource descriptor having a set of attributes that match the description of the desired resource.

9. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 4, wherein the binding-type indicator causes the resource mediator to remove any of the references that correspond to resources that are not currently available when resolving a local name.

10. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the resource mediator enables the task to transfer the flexible binding to another task in the computer software system.

11. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the resource mediator enables the task to transfer the flexible binding to another task in the computer software system along with a set of additional flexible bindings.

12. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the message includes a primary resource field that holds the local name for the desired resource and a set of additional resource fields each of which holds a local name that the task uses to refer to an additional resource for which a flexible binding is to be delivered to the resource handler task.

13. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 12, wherein the primary resource field and each additional resource field includes a field for holding a local name which the task uses to refer to a name space to be used to resolve the corresponding local names.

14. (currently amended) The computer-~~software~~ system of claim 12, wherein the resource handler uses a default name space associated with the task to resolve the local names in the primary resource and additional resource fields.

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15. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 12, wherein the primary resource field includes the binding-type indicator that informs the resource mediator of how to resolve the local name in the primary resource field.

16. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the flexible binding is a partial binding that includes a reference to a resource descriptor for a resource associated with a task that will complete the partial binding.

17. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 16, wherein the resource mediator enables the task to transfer the partial binding to another task in the ~~computer-software~~ system which generates a request to the task that will complete the partial binding.

18. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 16, wherein the resource mediator enables the task to transfer the partial binding to another task in another ~~computer-software~~ system which generates a request to the task that will complete the partial binding.

19. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 16, wherein the name space is arranged as a structured name space with an ordered list of frames.

20. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the message specifies a repository view that holds a subset of resource descriptors contained in a repository of the ~~computer-software~~ system and the flexible binding includes a reference to a resource descriptor in the repository view for each of the one or more available resources.

21. (currently amended) The ~~computer-software~~ system of claim 1, wherein the message specifies a repository view that holds a subset of resource descriptors contained in a repository of the software system and the flexible binding is a partial binding that

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includes a reference to a resource descriptor for a resource associated with a task that will complete the partial binding.

22. (previously presented) A method for providing flexible bindings in a software system, comprising the steps of:

creating a name space which corresponds to a task executing in the software system;

writing a flexible binding into the name space that binds a local name used by the task to one or more of a set of available resources of the computer system using a description of a desired resource;

obtaining a message from the task which contains the local name and in response identifying a resource handler task for handling the message by resolving the local name using the flexible binding; and

using a binding-type indicator to specify one of flexible binding or tight binding.

23. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the step of resolving the local name using a reference to a resource descriptor in a repository of the software system for each of the one or more available resources which is included in the flexible binding in response to the binding-type indicator in the message that specifies the tight binding.

24. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the steps of:

resolving the local name using a reference to a resource descriptor in a repository of the software system for each of the one or more available resources if any of the references are included in the flexible binding;

resolving the local name using the description of the desired resource if none of the references are included in the flexible binding.

25. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the step of searching a repository in the software system for a

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resource descriptor having a set of attributes that match the description of the desired resource in response to the binding-type indicator in the message that specifies the flexible binding.

26. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the steps of:

- searching a repository in the software system for a resource descriptor having a set of attributes that match the description of the desired resource;
- updating a list in the flexible binding of references to resource descriptors in the repository that match the description of the desired resource.

27. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the step of removing from a list in the flexible binding any references to resource descriptors in a repository of the software system that correspond to resources that are not currently available.

28. (original) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of transferring the flexible binding to another task in the software system in response to the message from the task.

29. (original) The method of claim 22, further comprising the step of transferring a set of additional flexible bindings to another task in the software system in response to the message from the task.

30. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the message specifies a name space that holds the flexible binding.

31. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the flexible binding is contained in a default name space associated with the task.

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32. (original) The method of claim 22, wherein the flexible binding is a partial binding that includes a reference to a resource descriptor in a repository of the software system for a resource associated with a task that will complete the partial binding.

33. (original) The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of transferring the partial binding to another task in the software system which generates a request to the task that will complete the partial binding.

34. (original) The method of claim 32, further comprising the step of transferring the partial binding to another task in another software system which generates a request to the task that will complete the partial binding.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 22, wherein the step of resolving the local name comprises the step of resolving the local name using a reference to a resource descriptor in a repository of the software system for each of the one or more available resources in the flexible binding in response to the binding-type indicator in the message that specifies the a tight binding and using a specified arbitration policy to select one of the references.

36. (new) The method of claim 22 further comprising using an arbitration policy to select a resource if more than one resource matches the description of the desired resource.